

consistent with the offense in this case. He is being thoughtful and not political. What is best for the many of us is to be thoughtful and not political. All crimes are not "impeachment offenses." If so, we could impeach the President for walking his dog without a leash. That is unlawful in the District of Columbia. That is bad conduct, thus absurdly underscoring the danger of substituting our belief of what the Constitution states. The Constitution says nothing about bad conduct as an impeachable offense.

I believe the Constitution sets out a process that Congress should follow when serious allegations of wrongdoing, allegations of impeachable offenses, have been made against the President. Under the Constitutional mandates, a process is now underway to determine if the President should be impeached. When we fail to follow the constitutional process, we fail to consider the lessons we have learned.

Just ask Richard Jewel who was first accused of the Atlanta bombings, or ask anyone else or thousands of persons, innocent persons who have been wrongly accused. We should allow that process to take its course and, throughout this process, we should be very careful to insist upon fairness, the rule of law, and impartial judgment.

Mr. Speaker, we have learned many lessons. Hopefully, we have learned the lesson that an impeachment proceeding is a very serious process.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The Chair will remind Members of the House to refrain from personal references to the President.

#### DO-NOTHING CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. WISE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, while I have another matter to talk about, I also want to rise in tribute to my colleague and classmate, the gentleman from California (Mr. TORRES). We came together in the Congress of 1983. I view the gentleman as being a true renaissance person in so many ways in the best sense of the word. He has always represented our class well, and I wish him good luck from one of his fellow classmates.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a couple of things: scheduling and investigations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it ought to be pointed out that as we hopefully wind into the final week of this Congress, we are today at October 6. October 1 is the beginning of the Federal fiscal year, and I think it is time that the American people understand that there is no Federal budget. There was no Federal budget passed this year. This Congress, while it can find time to

do all kinds of investigations, and we ought to be investigating where it is necessary, could not find time to pass a Federal budget. So we are operating under a temporary or short-term continuing resolution until October 9. Presumably, we will either have another continuing resolution or another short-term one to carry us forward or the government shuts down.

One of the basic things that the Congress ought to be able to do is to pass a budget for the next fiscal year. Incidentally, in the 13 appropriation bills that really make up the Federal budget, as of a couple of days ago, I believe one had been signed into law, several more are finally beginning to work their way through. Most of those will not be passed in a timely manner either and, once again, we will be faced with a continuing resolution.

So if we had all of this time to conduct all of these investigations, what is it we did not have time to do? Well, the investigations curiously, many of them, and I sit on the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight that has been involved in many of the investigations, many of them dealt with campaign finance reform. So it would seem logical after millions of dollars of investigations, hundreds of subpoenas and depositions and inquiries and witnesses, it would be logical that Congress would try to fix the problem, right? The problem being millions of dollars of soft money being abused by both Republicans and Democrats. That was the problem in 1996. That is what the investigation is about.

The American people will not see a campaign finance reform bill this year. It passed the House, it cannot be brought up in the other body.

One would think that with 70 percent of the American people covered by their employers in health insurance, and those 70 percent, they are in managed care plans; one would think there would be a Patients' Bill of Rights to protect those. That is one of the problems that I hear the most about. There will be no meaningful Patients' Bill of Rights for managed care plans this year.

One would think with Social Security being on everybody's lips, there would be something being done by this Congress about Social Security. Sorry, no Social Security reform this year.

One would think that with millions of Americans having lost much of their retirement in just the last 2 months because of the stock market going into the tank, one would think that that could be something that Congress could deal with. Millions of Americans are going to get a surprise this month when they go to open their quarterly statement on their 401(k) or thrift plan, retirement plan to find out how much their holdings have diminished because of the stock market decline. Sorry, this Congress is not taking that up this year.

Nor will it take up anything apparently that will deal with the Asian sit-

uation, including funding for the International Monetary Fund to stop the hemorrhage. Sorry, this Congress is too busy. But what can this Congress do? Boy, it can investigate.

That is why I find it so interesting, when there are some who want to urge the Committee on the Judiciary to be open-ended, to go beyond the matters that have been brought to it, and instead to get into Travelgate, Filegate, Whitewater, maybe even Watergate, who knows.

The irony to this is that these have been covered extensively for the last 2 years. The Senate Thompson hearings, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight hearings on Filegate and Travelgate. The Committee on Banking and Financial Services hearings on Whitewater. Our committee alone spent 22 days of hearings on these matters, including campaign finance reform, millions of dollars spent.

So when we hear the talk about, well, we need to have the Committee on the Judiciary open all of these up, this is what this Congress, all it has done for 2 years. Where are the results?

Mr. Speaker, the reality of the situation is, this is a do-nothing Congress, and unfortunately, there is a lot of diversion going on to cover that fact up. No budget, no campaign finance reform, no Patients' Bill of Rights, no Social Security reform, nothing done about the economy, nothing done about the stock market, nothing done about the Asian economy, nothing done about South America.

Mr. Speaker, if people love investigations, they will really like this Congress. Let me just suggest one more investigation. Who is responsible for this do-nothing Congress?

#### ELECTRIC RESTRUCTURING—LET US GET IT RIGHT

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, deregulation of the airlines, natural gas, railroads, telecommunications, and trucking industries yield annual savings equal to nearly 1 percent of America's gross domestic product. Next January, in the 106th Congress, we will attempt to craft a measure that will finally and successfully unleash competition and savings from the utility industry.

In recent years, competition has replaced regulation for the electric power industry in many other nations, including the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Norway, Chile and Argentina. Many took a very long term approach to this process. The United States faces a unique situation in that our electric power industry is largely already privatized. So we must focus on altering our current system and effectively fostering competition.

Now, this should not be done through a Federal mandate. Five of the 10 largest electric consumer States already have mandatory competitive restructuring. Clearly, we would be wise to make the State-mandated restructuring more efficient instead of imposing a separate, huge new Federal mandate.